

Mayor Sandra H. Larson Leaves a Lasting Legacy

On Thursday, Jan. 17, Veneta Mayor Sandra H. Larson passed away peacefully at her home surrounded by family. Prior to her passing, Larson had selflessly worked with City leadership to ensure a smooth transition of governance and momentum of ongoing projects. On Jan. 14, she had tendered, and the Veneta City Council had accepted, her resignation.

Mayor Larson leaves a lasting legacy. A retired high-school teacher and self-described “doting grandmother,” she moved to Veneta in 1999 with her husband, Larry. Here, she said she found a “warm and welcoming community where it was easy to fit in and to volunteer.” She volunteered in local schools, helped establish the Applegate Regional Theater, and as a member of the Ford Family cohort aided in building the concession stand at the TSP fields on Bolton Hill Rd.

She came to serve on the Veneta City Council in 2009. Larson was named Mayor in July 2012, when her predecessor, Mayor Sharon Hobart, stepped down for medical reasons. Larson was then elected into office in the Nov. 2012 General Election and overwhelmingly re-elected in 2016.

During her tenure, she prioritized growth and economic development, Highway 126 expansion and

other transportation infrastructure improvements, public safety, and providing education and recreation opportunities for youth. She was instrumental in establishing the Fern Ridge Service Center on Broadway and worked tirelessly toward funding the Kiddie Pool at the Veneta Community Pool. Larson espoused the need for citizen participation in local government and was a central figure in countless community activities.

The Larson family will host a Celebration of Life at Fern Ridge Middle School on Feb. 10 at 1:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that contributions be made to Mid Lane Cares, Applegate Regional Theater, or the Fern Ridge Library Foundation.

“Sandy was a remarkable woman and we were blessed to have called her a friend,” said City Administrator Ric Ingham. “It is with heavy hearts that we must make the transition in leadership.”

Keith Weiss, who has served on the City Council since 2017, has agreed to complete the remainder of Larson’s four-year term. “It’s a very difficult time, and I have big shoes to fill,” said Mayor Weiss. “Sandy was a true champion for the City and its residents.” Weiss has vowed to “continue advancing the agenda she had set.”

Mayor Weiss has served as a liaison to the

City’s Transportation Advisory Committee and Veneta Homeless Advocacy Board as well as eight years on the Veneta Citizen Budget Committee. A Navy veteran, he worked 30 years as a supermarket manager.

Thomas Cotter will continue as Council President alongside Councilors Robbie McCoy and Calvin Kenney, which leaves a Council vacancy. “The City is reaching out to the community to fill this seat,” Ingham explained.


Prospective candidates who have resided within Veneta city limits for the past year and meet the qualifications set forth by the state constitution, are encouraged to visit the



City’s website at www.venetaoregon.gov and click on “Council Vacancy” under “What’s New” to download an application. Applications are also available at City Hall, and will be accepted until Feb. 6. That date may be extended at Council’s discretion.

CIVIC CALENDAR February 2019

All meetings held at City Hall unless otherwise noted

5	Planning Commission Meeting	6:30 p.m.
6	Park Board Meeting	4:30 p.m.
11	City Council Work Session	5:00 p.m.
11	Joint Work Session of City Council & Planning Commission	6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
11	City Council Meeting - Special Time, followed by Urban Renewal Agency	7:35 p.m.
13	Veneta by Design Community Planning Workshop	12:30 p.m.
14	Happy Valentine's Day 	
TBD	City Council Special Meeting	TBD
18	Presidents' Day	Closed
21	Municipal Court	8:30 a.m.
25	City Council Meeting	6:30 p.m.

Deputy Darreyl Davis Joins City Law Enforcement Team

The City of Veneta welcomes Deputy Darreyl Davis to its five-person police force. Davis has more than 22 years of local law enforcement experience, with an emphasis on community policing strategies such as those practiced in Veneta.

"Our family has always been small-town people, raising kids in Triangle Lake and Thurston," Davis said. "That means being involved in community and nonprofits. So it's just what you do. You do life together."

That viewpoint is just what the City team wants in law enforcement — to build close ties with the community. For Veneta, that means working proactively with Neighborhood Watch groups,

teaching people how to safeguard their homes and businesses, having a regular presence in troubled areas, and engaging with schools to help kids understand the role of police in their community.

Davis graduated from Thurston High School in 1989 and spent the next five years in the U.S. Marine Corps. After being honorably discharged, he worked three years at the Oregon State Penitentiary before joining the Lane County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) in 1998, where he worked at the Lane County Jail and ultimately became a patrol officer.

At LCSO, he reconnected with a fellow Thurston graduate, Sgt. Steve Sieczkowski, who now supervises Veneta's

law enforcement contract.

"I'm excited to have Darreyl here," said Sieczkowski. "We've accomplished some good things together in the past and we're aligned in how we address policing. We're both family men. That's why we do this job: to raise our kids and be good role models."

For the past nine years, the City of Veneta has contracted with LCSO to provide cost-effective law enforcement. Sieczkowski has overseen that contract for about 18 months, managing the four deputies who patrol Veneta. "I like what we're seeing out here," he said. "We have a great crew, and Darreyl will bring a lot to the table."

Already a member of

LCSO's Tactical Response Team and Search and Rescue, Davis will soon become certified as a School Resource Officer, attend Traffic School, and obtain car seat certification. That will allow him to more effectively patrol the local school zones, respond to any calls at the schools, and sponsor safety seminars for the community.

A married father of three, Davis is an avid outdoorsman and looks forward to working with the citizens of Veneta and having a positive impact on local youth. He replaces Deputy Brian Jesse, who returned to LCSO's main office after serving the residents of Veneta for the past four years.

City Allows Accessory Dwellings and Mobile Vending

The Veneta City Council and Planning Commission have taken steps to address a shortage of affordable housing and make it easier for entrepreneurs to start small businesses.

At its Jan. 15 meeting, the Veneta City Council heard the reading of Ordinance No. 548, which would allow one Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) per single-family dwelling. This amendment complies with an Oregon State Law enacted July 1, 2018 that requires cities with a population of more than 2,500 to "remove barriers to development" within their

urban growth boundaries by "allowing the construction of ADUs, subject to reasonable local regulations relating to siting and design." An ADU is an attached or detached residential structure that is used in connection with or as an accessory to a single-family dwelling.

"ADUs will now be allowed in all, not just some, residential zoning districts," explained Veneta Community Development Director Kay Bork. The ordinance aims to encourage a variety of housing options, maintain consistency with the purpose of the residential

zones, and address compatibility between accessory dwellings and single-family dwellings on abutting lots. ADUs may not exceed 600 square feet or 50 percent of the primary unit square footage, whichever is less.

The ordinance was adopted at the January 14 Council Meeting and is effective February 13. ADUs will be subject to permit applications and fees.

And on Nov. 6, 2018, the Veneta Planning Commission heard a proposal for commercial zoning changes that would make it easier for entre-

preneurs to start small businesses using mobile vending units (MVUs). "Veneta does not have enough commercial infrastructure for entrepreneurs seeking to start a small business," explained Associate Planner Lisa Garbett. "MVUs, which can include food carts or other retail units on wheels, offer an affordable way to test out ideas before making the leap of establishing a brick and mortar business."

This proposal is still in the Planning Commission phase, but Garbett said the City hopes to adopt it this spring.